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✓THE CALL OF THE NORTH✓

NOV 29 1921

Photoplay in five reels

✓From Stewart Edward White's novel "Conjuror's House"

Adaptation by Jack Cunningham

Directed by Joseph Henabery ✓

✓Author of the photoplay (under Section 62) ✓
Famous Players-Lasky Corporation of the U. S. ✓

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THE CALL OF THE NORTH

(Conjuror's House)

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by

Stewart Edwart White.

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For more than 200 years, the Hudson's Bay Company maintained a monopoly over the greater part of what is now Canada. The monopoly was so far reaching that the factors, or representatives of the great company, held the power of life or death over all of those who lived within reach of the trading posts.

But, in 1870, the agitation against this monopoly became so strong that the company surrendered its charter in exchange for certain property in an around the trading posts and at other points in the Dominion.

However, there were certain of the factors who did not give up their autocratic powers--largely because they were protected from the scrutiny of civil rule by hundreds of miles of untried wilderness. These factors, until a few years ago, still exercised the prerogatives of an absolute monarch without thought of the Canadian parliament or its laws. This state of affairs was not condoned by the board of directors at Hudson's Bay House in London, but it was said in some quarters that the owners of the company did not take serious steps to stop the autocratic exercise of an illegal authority on the part of their servants.

In time there were 122 of these trading posts flung in an irregular chain across the frozen bosom of the North, some inside the Arctic Circle and some far to the south of it.

At the time of the surrender of the charter which had been granted by King Charles to his relative, Prince Rupert, and "that company of merchants-adventurers trading into Hudson's Bay", there were men known as free traders, who were trading with the Indians in defiance of the company. In some localities, which were near enough to civilization for the force of public opinion to reach and lay hold on arbitrary factors, the free trader led a comparatively happy existence. But, in places remote from the settlements, the free trader followed a calling fraught with great danger.

The servants of the company harrassed him on every side and warned him from the country. If he continued to defy the edicts of the factor, he finally was apprehended, brought before the factor and treated to a one-sided trail at the end of which he was convicted and sent forth into the wilderness. Before he was released, however, he was deprived of his gun and all provisions save a small bundle of food--that being the sop which the factor grudgingly threw to constituted law and order, in that it could not be said the prisoner had been stripped of everything.

This procedure was called "La Longue Traverse" or the "Journey of Death". That such a mode of punishment existed was denied by the company officials and employees, but the rumors persisted that such was the truth. However, if it was true, precaution was taken that it did not become common rumor. It was said that the victim of the long traverse never reached civilization in case he was a man of intelligence and likely to reach official ears with his story. The factor's Indian henchmen saw to it that, if the rigors of the wilderness failed to finish the exhausted voyageur, a rifle bullet did. It was further said that no orders were ever given. The factor merely drove the hapless free trader from the post and his Indians followed without any instructions.

Our story concerns two men who were sentenced to the journey of death--a father and son.

At Fort Rupert, where the story opens, Graham Stewart, a young man with a wife and son in the settlements, had been chief trader for some time. During his incumbency, Galen Albret, the factor, a man of middle age, had gone to Winnipeg and married a wife many years his junior. He had brought Elodie to the fort where she soon began to droop. She loved her powerful, hard hitting, but tender husband, but she longed for the companionship of men and women of her own age and sympathies. In Graham Stewart she found such an one--but their friendship was more of the brother-sister kind. There was no hint of love.

However, Andrew Levoy, a crooked metis employe of the post, had begun to fear Stewart and desired to get rid of him. So he began to poison the mind of Galen Albret--to suggest a liaison between Elodie and Graham. Albret, aroused to that jealousy which is almost always in the heart of the man who married a woman much younger than himself, thought to force Graham from the post. He wrote to the headquarters of the company in Canada suggesting that the position of chief trader could be dispensed with at Fort Rupert.

The night the company's reply came, Stewart caught Levoy hiding away furs which he had stolen from the company. Levoy pleaded for mercy, giving as his excuse that his wages were small and his wife and boy had been ill all winter.

Stewart's heart was touched and he agreed not to tell Albret provided Levoy would leave the company and never attempt to get employment with it again. Levoy promised and Stewart told him to return the furs.

Returning to the factor's living room, Stewart found the mail had been brought by a courier des bois. In the mail, he found a match safe with his name engraved upon it. He showed this to Elodie. Her excitement and delight over this present which proved to be from Stewart's wife and boy further inflamed the wrath of Albret. Thus it was that Albret found satisfaction in showing a letter from the company to Stewart. In it, Stewart learned that his position as chief trader was no more--that he was to report to another post where "something" would be found for him to do.

Graham refused to accept the situation and told Albret that he would quit the company and get backing as a free trader. Albret exhibited no interest in Stewart's plans whatever. Stewart left the post.

In the years that followed, Elodie Albret died and left a little daughter. This daughter became the apple of Albret's eye. Stewart became a free trader and was unmolested by any of the company's factors until he encroached upon the domain of Galen Albret. Then he encountered trouble. He was lured from his trading station by a trick, his camp was burned and his rifle stolen. He was left to try the long traverse. He did not reach the settlements, because Levoy followed and shot him.

That same spring, Stewart's wife died. The night she lay under the light of the candles, Ned Stewart, her twelve year old son, heard the story of how his father's body was found by a woodsman who arrived in the settlements with the match safe and other trinkets taken from Stewart's clothes. The woodsman made it plain that the manner of Stewart's death never would be known.

Beside his mother's bed, Ned Stewart knelt and made an oath to search his father's enemies and kill them.

The years passed and the boy became a man. He followed in the footsteps of his father and became a free trader. But, he fought on broader lines than his father--gathered backing of some proportions and established a sizeable post along one of the trails leading to Conjuror's House. At this post, he stopped Indian trappers and traded for their furs before they reached the Hudson's Bay Post to the North.

Galen Albret, the head factor at Conjuror's House heard of this and sent Placide, one of his couriers des bois, with

a band of Indians and Achille Picard, a French Canadian employe, to capture Ned Trent, as young Steward was now known. They attached Ned, but he eluded them and would have escaped except that Achille Picard fell into the lake and would have been drowned but for Ned's help. Ned has exposed himself to capture and thus saved a life.

When Ned arrived at the trading post, he saw Virginia Albret for the first time. She saw in him the embodiments of romance, for good-looking young men were scarce in the vicinity of the Frigid Zone. She became infatuated at once.

Ned defied Albret and Albret deferred judgment on his case. When Ned found himself free to roam the environs of the post, he sought Achille Picard. Achille told Ned that he believed Albret was going to lock him up until the coming of winter and then send him out on the Long Traverse. Achille wanted to get Ned a gun, but he did not dare. He told Ned that he might as well have been drowned in the lake as to get a gun.

Then Ned had an idea. He believed that he could goad Albret to the white heat of anger where the older man would send him out at once and that he might get a rifle in the meantime.

He went in to bait Galen to the point of fury, but was progressing badly when Virginia came in. Ned saw that he had fascinated Virginia and he made quick love to her under the glowering eyes of Galen. Then he kissed her and Galen's wrath flamed to the point where he called in Placide and others ordering them to prepare to send Ned out on the Long Traverse--a method of punishment which he had denied to exist an hour previously.

Ned went outside and met Achille near the window of the room in which Virginia was sobbing, then smiling, under the spell of that well-remembered kiss. Ned told Achille that he believed he knew where he could get a rifle. Achille, who was by way of being the humble squire of his princess, Virginia, sensed what was in the wind and bided his time. Achille was torn between his love for Virginia and his feeling of gratitude to Ned.

That evening, Ned sought Virginia and played upon her beginnings of love for him until he deliberately spoiled it all because he saw that he could not use this innocent girl in such a manner. Achille, who had seen the passage of love between the two, pleaded with Ned to let Virginia alone. Ned half promised. Achille went to Virginia and warned her against Ned. Then she suspected that danger confronted Ned, but found no one who would enlighten her about the peculiarities of that danger.

The next morning she went to her best friend, the wife of Doctor Cockburn, from whom she learned the truth. When she heard that her father was at the bottom of these things, she sought Ned and argued him into taking her own rifle which was not among those accounted for at the post. Ned finally agreed to accept her sacrifice when she told him that her father was sending

her to Quebec that summer to enter a school for young women.

In the night, Virginia and Ned quietly went across the river in a canoe. On the other shore, Ned was full of the future, as all men are. She was full of the moment. Ned kissed her lightly in saying good-bye and, with true feminine inconsistency, she paddled swiftly back to the other shore in a flare of anger. Ned saw that he had hurt the girl whom he had come to love and he swam back to make it right with her. There occurred the real kiss of betrothal--interrupted by Galen's Indians, who were searching for the missing Ned. Ned managed to elude the Indians until Virginia was safe from detection, but he was unsuccessful in making good his escape.

Taken back to Albret, Ned refused to tell who had helped him and stuck to the story that he stole Virginia's rifle from her room. Galen did not suspect that his daughter could have had anything to do with the premature escape.

Then Galen threatened to have Ned hanged if he did not tell who helped him and Ned tried to force Galen to shoot him on the spot. Galen would have done so, had not Virginia interfered. She confessed her part in the affair and boldly told Galen she loved Ned. This made Galen furious. He denounced Virginia--ordered her and her lover from his post. Virginia fainted and Ned carried her into the living room where he deposited her on the couch.

Galen, watching him go, brushed his hand against the old match safe bearing the name "Graham Stewart", which Ned had laid on the table during a moment of insolence in which he lighted a cigarette further to exasperate Galen.

Galen went into the living room and there watched the return of Virginia to consciousness, still holding the match safe in his hand.

The match safe brought back bitter memories. He remembered how he had unjustly thought his wife untrue to him--how he had driven Stewart forth to die--and how, years later, Andrew Levey had confessed to the lies which blackened Graham and Elodie in Galen's eyes.

Galen went into the council room again and faced Ned. Galen began to confess and Ned at once knew that he was facing the man he had sworn to kill. He told Galen so. Galen threw a revolver on the table and told Ned that he stood ready--let Ned kill him now if he thought he was right. Ned raised the revolver, but he could not fire. Virginia stood in the way. Galen remarked that he felt she would always stand in the way. Galen then sent Ned away for the night.

The next morning there was much activity about the post. The Abitibi brigade was going south. Ned was brought forth and, to his surprise, he heard Galen Albret tell the men that he was

to command the brigade on the way south. Another surprise awaited him. In one of the canoes sat Virginia dressed for the long voyage up the Mighty River of the Moose. Ned turned to Galen. Galen indicated Virginia and said:

"I do not give her to you. She is in your care. You will take her to Quebec. What happens then, I cannot foretell."

Ned stepped into the canoe to a smiling Virginia, while Galen stood on the shore and watched the brigade paddle out into the lake and from view around a point of land.

As Ned and Virginia sat with clasped hands looking into the future, a head insinuated itself between their shoulders and Achille said with a grin:

"So, M'sieu--you tak' La Longue Traverse, anyway--Oui!"

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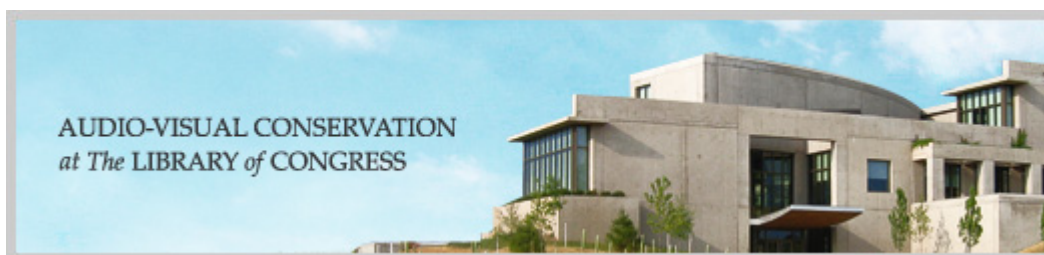
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